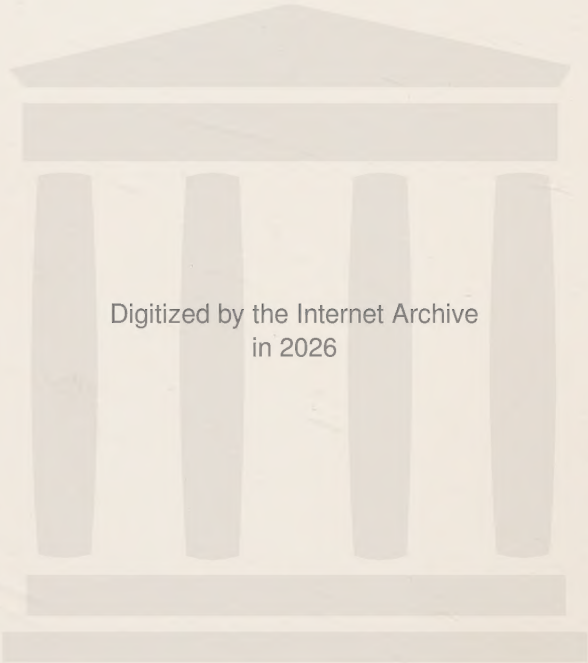
DAILY SALVATION

MY LADDER TO HEAVEN

GEORGE CLARKE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Daily
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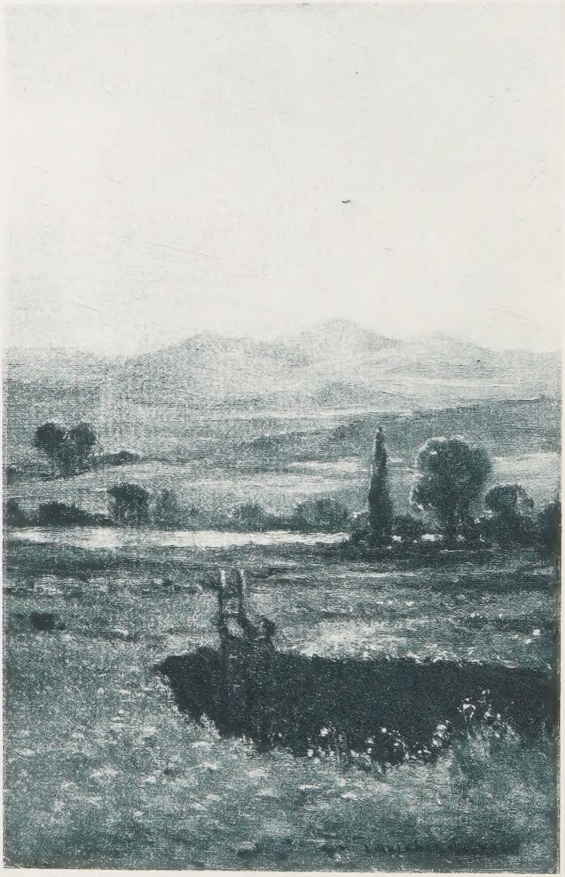

Daily Salvation

Or, My Ladder to Heaven

By
George Clarke

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Preface

IT is customary for authors to write a preface. I do not propose to write a proper one, nor apologise for writing still another book, and I explain my reasons for doing so—these lie on the very surface. My object is to help the many thousands to whom I speak, or have spoken to, and the many others I wish I could have addressed by word of mouth. I can only say this,—never have I written a book in more agonizing prayer, nor have I ever sent one out in greater hopefulness, that it may accomplish a great purpose. It has cost me

much to write it ; it will cost me more that it may be greatly used. I believe God will own this effort for His glory and the advancement of His kingdom, and shall be glad of all prayers to this end.

Yours faithfully,

G. CLARKE.

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KENSINGTON, W.

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CHAPTER I

"*DAILY SALVATION*"

PSALM cvii.

TO help another to live the Christian life is, I suppose, the highest aspiration of every earnest follower of our Lord Jesus Christ; especially is this so with such as have been raised up by God to "teach all," and to lead people to believe it is possible to live such a life. I say "to believe," because I certainly think that in all, even the most seemingly careless, there is deep down in their hearts the desire, but how to fulfil the same is not with the many. That is why I write this book. I have discovered a way of help to daily salvation for myself, and therefore I must tell it to others, in the hope that it may be the means of their being daily saved too.

Every one who spends his life in

endeavouring to help others has his own particular way under God's guidance of doing it, and to each his own way seems the best. This is what I feel about my own way ; it may not be the best there is, but it is the best to me, and if my plan helps any person, as much as it has helped and does help me, I shall not need to apologise for writing still another book. It may be only a disappointment to some ; but if it help others, let us all be very thankful.

One night, whilst holding a mission in Edinburgh, I left a minister, the Rev. Dr. ——, to speak to the numbers who had stayed for the after-meeting, while I went to try and lead the people in the enquiry room into the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Having done what little I could, I returned to the church and listened to my friend ; I wish I could repeat his words, but can do no more than give a mere outline of his address.

He said, "The best way I can help you to know what to do to be saved is to tell you what I do myself. Each night, as far as possible, when the day's work is done, I retire to the quiet of my own room, and there in thought let my mind go over the events of the day, until all stand photographed upon my memory. There is much for which to praise God; but, as a rule, there are so many opportunities neglected, so many words spoken that ought not to have been uttered, so many sinful, selfish desires, so many wrong acts, for this heart is desperately wicked, that to me it is a very humbling time; then, as all these sins of omission and commission stand out and condemn me, added to which there is the past, the dreadful past, I can do nothing else but get down in humble abasement at the foot of the Cross, and there find peace and salvation, as

'I lay my sins on Jesus
The spotless Lamb of God,
Who bears them all and frees me
From their accursed load.

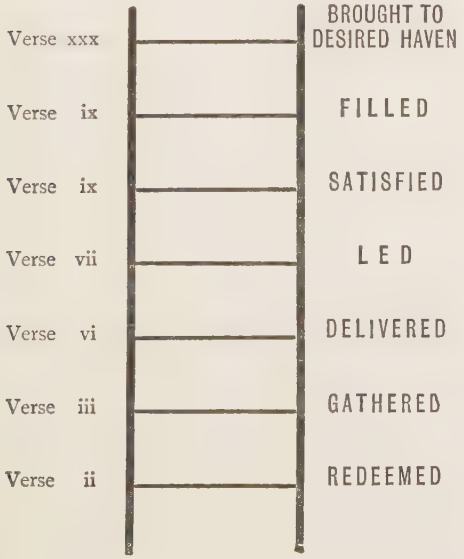
'I bring my guilt to Jesus
To wash my crimson stains,
White in the blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.'

Lev. xvi. 21, 22. 'Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sin . . . and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.'

When this is done, I can go and lay my head upon my pillow in peace, knowing that *my* Saviour has freed me from that accursed load. This is the way I am saved," he said, "and now will you not do this too?" We then all sang that hymn, and I felt Yes, his way is the only way to obtain peace of conscience from sins committed. The object of this book is to help you not to continue committing sins. If you take my plan of daily salvation, do not

forget to take His plan first; there is no peace except in and through the Cross, where Jesus bears all our iniquities into a land not inhabited.

What I do, is to get alone at the end of the day in my room, and there I keep a drawing of a ladder, something like this—



Then, quietly and searchingly, I ask myself in the sight of God, Whereabouts on that ladder have I stood to-day? Whereabouts do I stand now? This ladder I call

"*My ladder to Heaven.*"

In order that you may make my ladder yours also, let me explain just what it means to me.

You will see that in our picture I have drawn a pit,—a pit of miry clay; I know it well, for I lived in its dark and gloomy centre for oh, such a long time. How I yearned to get out of it, up to the beautiful green grass of a pure clean life and into the bracing air of a strong and manly existence, to hold communion with God, to walk in the
Ps. xxiii. 2. sunshine and lie down "in green pastures and beside the still waters"! But try as I might I could not get there. I tried and tried, and the more efforts I made to scale its greasy sides, the worse it became; and each night the

bitter sense of failure and at last hopelessness came upon me. The filth clung to me until I was not only a defeated, hopeless man, but a very unclean one too. How true is this picture of an unsaved soul in a horrible pit of miry clay, dark and damp, with no freedom, no power to rise, but always the same life day after day, never any higher up; while with any real thought comes the sense of weakness, filth, and uselessness. Then, in serious moments, desperate efforts are made to get out, to get above all this failure and loss into the gladness of being daily saved. What efforts are made! Good works, joining the Church, taking the Sacrament, saying long prayers, reading the Bible, and even acts of heroic self-abnegation are proposed; but when the end of the day comes, it is just the same, no higher up; all these efforts have done nothing, except to make the clay more slippery and yourselves more

Job ix. 30, 31. Job xlii. 5, 6.

hopeless and unclean. Have you got thus far in my picture? Have you tried to get out of your pit without my ladder and found the effort useless? If you have, I can help you, and by the grace of God I will, if you will let me.

CHAPTER II

FIRST RUNG

"REDEEMED"

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so"
Ps. cvii. 2

TURN to my Psalm,—the cviith. Wonderful, blessed Psalm! Here is the word for you, see how often it occurs.

"They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and *He* delivered them out of their distresses." That is what He did for me years ago. I cried unto the Lord, and, indeed, He did deliver me out of my distress. He let down "my ladder" into the pit right to my very feet, and all I had to do was to get on to it, and that moment I was saved. *v.* 13.

You will notice that my ladder has seven rungs, and when one gets on to

the very first rung, one's head is out of the pit in the pure atmosphere of heaven's peace. No more the damp, disease-giving air, but the invigorating, health-restoring breath of heaven. But one's whole body is not saved until one stands and keeps at the very top. Having once got on to the first rung, thank God, He keeps you from ever getting off the ladder altogether, but you must see to it whereabouts on the ladder you live. Your salvation is assured the moment you get on the first rung; but the joy of your salvation depends upon how high up the ladder you keep yourself, and in seeing to this is the secret of being daily saved.

Now, as so much depends upon your getting on to the first rung of the ladder, even your eternal salvation, I must explain very clearly what it means. But let me first ask you to look at the names of the different rungs of my ladder.

Verse ii. Redeemed.
„ iii. Gathered.
„ vi. Delivered.
„ vii. Led.
„ ix. Satisfied.
„ ix. Filled.
„ xxx. Brought to desired haven.

You will find the first rung in the second verse.

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed out of the hands of the enemy."

What is it to be redeemed? Let me try and make it plain, so that you may be able to say very definitely when you get into the quiet of your room, "Yes, thanks be to God, I am redeemed, I am on the first rung of the ladder that leads to heaven." Here is an illustration, which to me is very perfect, of what it is to be redeemed. Suppose I go to a pawnbroker's and pawn my watch, say I borrow £10 upon it. The law of the land is, that before I can again get possession of it,

I must first redeem it, that is to say, pay back what I borrowed on it plus a certain interest. If I do not redeem my watch within a stated time, it becomes the property of the pawnbroker. But suppose that I cannot redeem it for myself, and I do not want the pawnbroker to keep it, then I can sell my ticket to some one who can redeem, and who wants to possess the watch, which then becomes his. Well, suppose the time for redemption comes and I cannot pay the price, and not wanting the pawnbroker to keep the watch, I sell my ticket to a wealthy friend and he redeems it. Now, to whom does my watch belong? Not to me, not to the pawnbroker, but to him who redeemed it. If I said, "Give me my watch," he could answer, "It is not yours, it is mine." If I went to law with him, the result would be the same.

When I look at my ladder and say that I stand upon the first rung, what

does it mean? Years ago, unconsciously perhaps, I put myself in pledge to the great pawnbroker, the devil, who offered me pleasures and so on, if I would let him have my soul; and having got into his hands, like the person in the miry clay pit I could not get out again; but I "cried to the Lord in my trouble, and He delivered me out of my distress." Jesus came, and wanting to possess me, He paid the price of my redemption, "not with silver and gold," but with His precious blood.

Now, to whom do I belong? Not to myself, not to the god of this world. No, but bought by Jesus, I belong to Him alone. Oh! "Let the redeemed of the Lord *say so*, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Are you redeemed? Can you stand on the first rung of my ladder? Ask yourself that question in the presence of God. I do not mean do you merely believe that the

Lord Jesus died for you and bore your sins in His own body on the tree. THAT you may believe and still not be redeemed. But what I, as God's messenger to your soul, dare to ask is this:

"Do you belong to Jesus?"

Some people are very much like a shopkeeper I once dealt with. I bought some goods of him, and paid for them, asking him to send them home. Next morning, wanting the things, I asked my wife if they had come. No, she had not seen them, nor had the servants. So I went to the shop and asked for my property. "Oh!" said the shopkeeper, "I am so sorry, sir, I have not sent them home." This is what some people do with their own souls. They say, "Yes, Jesus has bought me with a price, even His precious blood." But here comes the trouble, they have never delivered the goods to their rightful owner, and therefore they are not

saved. To be redeemed is not only to be bought and paid for, but to be delivered to the owner. Are you redeemed? Can you gladly answer, "Yes, I belong to Jesus, I am not my own." Then, thank God, you do stand upon the ladder, and your head and shoulders are already in the heavenlies. Only remember this, you must

"*Say so.*"

Perhaps you will say, "I believe all this is true, but my trouble is I cannot get on the ladder. I believe all you say, and I believe He has let down the ladder of salvation, even He Himself has come to me; but here I stop. I can get no further; I am still in the pit, and still in the dark." Are you sure that you wish to belong to Jesus, that you do not wish to have a bit of the spiritual pawnbroker's shop or the surroundings of it? Is there no clinging to the world, no clinging to the dirty clay called sin? If you really desire to

be saved and get on the ladder, read
Josh. xxiv. 15. our Psalm, "Cry unto the Lord, and He will deliver you." Choose for life to whom you will belong, and He will give you grace, even as you pray, to put your feet upon the first rung and rejoice in His finished work on the cross for
Isaiah liii. you, that your sins were laid on Jesus,
Ps. xl. 2. and He has "brought you up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings."

But that is only the first rung of the ladder, and though in the sense of your eternal salvation it is the most important of all, you must not stay there, but must mount up higher, that not only your soul may be saved, but your very self, in your day-by-day life.

CHAPTER III

SECOND RUNG

"GATHERED"

"He gathered them out of the lands"
Ps. cvii. 3

MY second rung is a very sweet one upon which to stand, and if it were not better to be even higher, I should say, here we may abide.

"*Gathered.*"

"He gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in." Ps. cvii. 3.

Let me tell you what this means to me. When I go into my room at night and look over the experiences of the day, it is indeed no wonder that praise arises to the Lord for His goodness and

His wonderful works to me, one of the children of men. For it is a blessing to have stood on the second rung or higher up all that day. Listen to Jesus' own explanation of this step upward in our daily life: "How often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." "As a hen gathereth her chickens." What does He mean? I have often seen the old mother hen gather her little brood, when, for instance, a strange dog was prowling about, or a hawk flying overhead. Then was heard the cluck-cluck of the mother, as she tried to gather to herself, under the safe protection of her wings, her weak and sometimes wandering brood. Once I saw a little chicken that had got so far away from its mother that it could not or would not hear her warning cry; on and on the little one wandered, unmindful, perhaps unconscious, of its danger, until down came

Matt xxiii. 37.

the hawk, and the ungathered chick was lost.

Surely there are dogs enough prowling about us, and hawks hovering over us, to make it absolutely necessary for us to live so near to Christ that we may be able to hear His cry for us to come under His protection. "Satan, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And it is for Christians that he is mostly seeking. It seems to me that no young man or woman can live with his or her eyes open and not know the need of something more for daily life than being redeemed. It is only needful to walk out of doors to see how Satan has a temptation at every corner, especially suited to our personal temperament. There is a beautiful girl to tempt the young man; the laughing face and eyes of a man to tempt the girl, who, longing for companionship, after a tedious day's work, saunter out from lonely lodgings

1 Peter v. 8.

to kill time and stretch their limbs. What harm can there be in a little innocent fun? Ah! there begins the trouble. They do not know that these people are very likely possessed by the devil, and are in a sense the devil himself; he has come with the unerring skill of the old huntsman to devour the poor wandering bird; he knows the very time and place, he knows the sense of loneliness, and is too clever to send one called a sinner, for such would frighten, and he must conceal his claws. If such young people were only on the second rung, near enough to Christ to hear His warning voice, they would know their danger.

Or again, the doors of the brilliantly lighted, sensuous theatre, dancing-room, ball-room, or public-house, stand ever wide open, and as the poor redeemed one looks in, Satan has the right agent there to tempt, invite, or ensnare. "What matters it?" some will say;

"lots of Christians go to the theatre. And there are good plays, and some so religious too. Lots of Christians dance, and what is the danger of a drink?" Yes, all this is true, but has not Satan cleverness enough to have his own in the Churches and amongst so-called Christians? How can poor innocent mortals know who is the unconscious servant of the enemy of our souls, and who the servant of God? There is no way that we can tell, save one: that is to live on the second rung, so near to Christ that His all-searching eye may detect the danger we cannot see, and gather us as a hen gathereth her chickens.

Or again, a hen gathers her little ones when the pitiless storm rages around them; there nestling under her wing she keeps them in perfect rest. Have we no storms in our spiritual life? I know enough of life to know that no life is all sunshine; there are dark

times for all of us; there is a hemisphere of darkness as well as of light in each of our lives. What shall we do when the pitiful storms of temptation or persecution beat down upon us? I have learned that, when we are "gathered," the fiercest storm of terrific temptation, and the full blasts of slander and persecution, are impotent for harm. Beat down, they may, in all their fury; but they cannot reach the soul, which, on hearing the warning voice of the Saviour, has run to Him for safety. The storms beat upon Him, and break their fury upon Him, until driven back defeated, they, as well as the "gathered" one, find that no storm is strong enough to ruffle even a feather of the soul which has learned the secret of living upon the second rung. But if only on the first, then indeed the storms may work sad havoc; so, "friend, get up higher."

Once more, a hen gathereth her brood

when the cold is too severe for their thinly protected bodies. What a lot of trouble there is in this life! how often do the cold blasts of sorrow come to chill the very faith of the redeemed one! Like snow it falls, and cannot be resisted. A morning breaks without a cloud, and all is sunshine, warmth, and love; but soon a cloud appears, perhaps not larger than a man's hand. A loved one looks pale and ill, but it is nothing. Nothing! see now the sky is all dark and there is no sunshine, we are indeed bereft. Pain too deep for tears, and a numbness deadening all are caused by this cold blast of sorrow. Again, outward comforts and even luxuries may be all around us, all may be well in this world's concerns: there may be an honoured name, an increasing business, when suddenly the warmth of success is gone, and in its place comes cold that freezes our every joy. All is lost.

These things come in greater or lesser degree to every one ; there is the winter of trial as well as the spring and summer of joy in the spiritual world. But there is a place where the cold can never reach, and that is under His wings.

Isa. xxxii. 2. No, not the icy blasts from the north, nor the blustering storm from east or

Isa. xxv. 4. west, any more than the heats of temptation from the sunny south, for He

Ps. xci. 4. gathereth His children under His wings. I have oftentimes knelt in my room at night and praised God that all that day, a day of fierce storm or cruel cold, He has kept me in perfect peace. Do you wonder then that I call upon you redeemed ones to

Come near to Christ,

that you too may praise the Lord for His goodness ?

CHAPTER IV

THIRD RUNG

"DELIVERED"

"He delivered them out of their distresses"
Ps. cvii. 6

"THEN they cried unto the Lord, and He delivered them out of their distresses."

It is always so in the Christian life: the higher up one gets on the ladder the more complete is the salvation one secures, and the greater is the result in the daily deliverance. There is, therefore, no room for surprise on learning that, when we have once stood upon this rung of our ladder, good as the preceding one was, and full of cause for praise, this is better. Our capacities for enjoyment are increased, and our rest and praise are fuller. I have dis-

covered about this rung that many are prevented from coming up to it because they are not really willing to leave behind them in the pit those things from which they wish to be delivered. For there is a great difference between wishing to be saved and willing to be saved. This is so in every step of our journey heavenwards. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was completing the Bible, doubtless fearing some would even yet not understand, said to His beloved disciple, St. John, "Tell the people this last message, in which is concentrated the whole heart of heaven and the redeemed Church: 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'" The Spirit says "Come." That unseen but present Spirit of God, who falls upon you like the dew, and descends like the mantle of Elijah, may

Rev. xxii. 17.

now be touching every feeling of your heart and drawing you with the cords of love ; that something which you cannot define, but which made you long in the first place to get on to the first rung of the ladder and to be sure that you are redeemed, is ever afterwards urging you upwards, ever upwards. He says "Come" ; with Him it is always "Come." Come *to* Me, Come *nearer* to Me, Come *with* Me.

The Bride, that great company of loved ones, who have been redeemed and have gone to their rest,—they all with one voice call to you, "Come." A mother, father, wife, husband, child, friend, or minister stands just across the dark water which you call death, and beckons you beseechingly with one action, which is always "Come." Even as you read this, you may picture the outstretched arms ; while around you on all sides is the living bride of Christ, and if you could read the heart

that lies behind the look of longing in those eyes, it would say "Come to Jesus, come higher and higher."

Your own thirst or desire too urges you to step upwards; your own wish is a prayer, but an unanswered one, because you do not

"*Will it.*"

There is the trouble: the wish is present, but not the will. Let me explain the difference.

I may pass a shop, and see in the window an article I *wish* to have. I go inside and ask the price, and on being told it, I find I am quite able to pay it, but am not willing to part with that which would make the article mine. Every time I see the thing I wish it were mine, but it never will be until I *will it*; in other words, until I pay for it. So it is with every step of salvation: many an unsaved person wishes to be saved, but is not willing to give up that which keeps him from Christ, to take

up the cross and follow Him. They go on wishing unto prayer, but there is no answer, and never can be until they are willing.

I once met a Christian who went about chained by one sin, a slave to its power, because at a solemn time of consecration he told the Lord, "All but this one thing I am willing to give up." For many years he went about wishing to be delivered, but he never knew the joy of deliverance until he was on the third rung, and there in the presence of Jesus he learned to loathe his sin. Then this poor man "cried unto the Lord" and paid the price by asking for deliverance from this sin also, and from that moment "the Lord delivered him."

To stand upon my third rung you must be like the men in my Psalm, not only wishing to be delivered, but earnestly desirous; as long as there is the slightest clinging to the sin in your heart there can be no deliverance. In

other words, as it is with the first step of salvation, so it is with all the others: we must not only wish to be saved but will it. Then the Lord says to whatever power is holding you, be it power of world, flesh, or devil,

Rev. xxii. 17.

"LET HIM COME."

No power on earth or in hell can

Luke iv. 8. hinder that command, for He has come to set at liberty the captives. That moment you are willing the command goes forth, "Let him come." The gates

Acts xii. 5–10. of brass are opened, the bars of iron are broken asunder, the chains fall off, and the poor captive prisoner is standing on my third rung "delivered," rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His willing people free. Then there is only one thing left to do, and that is to take care we do not again

Gal. v. 1. get "entangled with the yoke of bondage."

I have heard that in America, during the great war between the Northern

and Southern States, the President, Abraham Lincoln, sent a negro chaplain with a proclamation of freedom, signed by himself, to a great concourse of poor slaves. When the messenger arrived, and saw the gathering of his own people, slaves with all the spirit crushed out of them, their hearts nearly broken, and many a body bearing about with it the scars of their cruel masters, we can imagine his feelings. How I should have liked to be that messenger! When he mounted the improvised platform and looked down upon that sea of faces, in which was written hope mingled with hopelessness, it is said that he forgot his speech, and with tears near to his eyes and filling his heart, he cried, "Fathers and mothers, I hold in my hand a proclamation signed by the President of the United States. From this moment you are free men and women. Never again shall your children be torn from your hearts and

sent away to a living death." Every parent present sprang to his feet, and with intense feeling shouted, "Glory be to God."

Again the messenger lifted his voice, "Husbands, never again shall your wife or daughter be dragged from you into worse than death." And husbands and wives fell upon each other's necks, and weeping great tears of joy, shouted, "Glory be to God." "Young men and women, never again shall you be sold into slavery, from this moment you are free. Your chains are broken, the slave-driver's whip must be put away." Then all the rest of the men, women, boys, and girls sprang to their feet and cried, "Glory be to God." One can picture the scene of intense emotion; men and women not knowing whether to laugh or cry, to pray or dance; the pressing forward to look at the proclamation, to kiss the signature which meant so much to them; no longer slaves, but

free. Indeed, there was only one way to express their feelings: it was "Glory be to God."

It was a moment never to be forgotten in that messenger's life, or by those who heard the good news. I, too, have a message, signed by the King of kings. I wonder will you heed it and escape from your slavery? If so, you and I can never forget this hour, and for life will rejoice that we are no more slaves to sin, but free men. Rom. vi. 18, 22. I know many a poor slave of a worse master than the worst of the few bad Southern planters, and chains more galling and burdens more heavy than the worst ever devised by the ingenuity of cruel men. I speak in the very name of God when I say to all such, "Come." Come and live upon my third rung, that you may be at once delivered. Stand there, and as the one time slave, who is under the flag of our country, is free, so shall you be; for

over you floats the banner of Him who makes His people free, and has the power to drive back those old masters who would once more enslave you, if only you will stay here on this place of deliverance.

What does it mean to stand here; how can you do it? It is to cry unto the Lord, that you may be delivered; to cry at every approach of the master, to cry and be delivered. Let me illustrate it. When I was a young Christian, just redeemed, I feared that I was not a Christian at all, because I was always falling into one sin. I went and told my trouble to an old Christian, who said, on my telling him I did not think I could be converted at all: "What makes you think so?" "I have no power over sin, and the Bible says, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.'" "Well," he said, "do you pray about it?" "Pray," said I, "I never prayed so hard about anything; I never

Rom. vi. 14.

say my prayers without pleading for this, and I never fall without crying to God not only for pardon but power, yet there is no answer; and I have always thought I had such a strong will, that if I made up my mind to anything I could do it, but here, I confess, I am beaten." He asked me what the sin was. I told him "bad temper," that I could not help it; I felt it bubbling up inside and fought all I could, but it was no good, out it would come, and I brought such disgrace on the cause because I had confessed over and over again that I was a Christian. "Well," said he, "here is your trouble,—

'*You pray at the wrong time.*'

Next time you feel this bubbling, as you call it, when somebody hurts your feelings or something,

'*Just say "Jesus" to yourself,*'

and keep on saying it, and you will find you will be delivered." I said, "Yes, and what more?" "That's all," said he.

Well, of course, I thanked him, but to myself I said, What nonsense, as if saying a little word like that would help me, when I have used all my strong will and prayers, and yet failed.

Some weeks went by, and I thought I was getting on finely when one day something went all wrong, and the bubbling began. I tried and tried, but it got stronger and stronger, and soon it would be out, some one would be hurt, dishonour brought to the name of Christ. I thought of the old man's plan, and prayerfully said "Jesus" to myself several times. Quick as an electric flash came the answer, the bubbling began to cease, and soon died altogether. Just as when you blow out the little lamp beneath the urn or kettle of boiling water; it has been almost boiling over, but the moment the heat creator is put out the bubbling ceases, and gradually the water cools down; there is a great calm. This is

what Jesus does. He drives away the passion creator, with His breath He blows it out. I learnt the secret that day, the moment I said "Jesus" to myself, I began to pray at the right time. He has not promised to deliver us from temptation before it comes, "but will with the temptation also make a way of escape." I ceased to try in my own strength, but just cast myself upon the power of the Lord. In fact, I cried unto the Lord. And there is my third rung, it is to put all fighting, subduing, killing into the Lord's hand, and not to try myself. It is like the first step, not to try but to trust. I wish I could say I have never failed since, but I can say this, that night by night, as I have looked back over the day, if I have to confess defeat, I have known the reason why; or if I have to praise God for victory in some trying moment, I have also known the why.

1 Cor. x. 13.

That moment I was on the third rung.

"There is no king that can be saved by the multitude of an host, neither is any mighty man delivered by much strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, and upon them that trust in Him, to deliver their soul from death or falling."

Ps. xxxiii. 16-19, R.V.

CHAPTER V

"DELIVERED"

"He delivered them out of their distresses"

IF you will go back to our Psalm you will see that when we are "gathered" we are delivered from all outward surroundings, but when "delivered" it is from all inward things. In the first part it is from a spirit of unrest. There are some Christians who never can find a place of habitation, *i.e.* a place of rest. The demon of unrest is in them. Nothing can ever go right, they worry over their work, they worry over their business or their household; it is always worry; they are never quiet but always in a hurry. The living Bride, seeing what discredit they bring on their Lord, cries without

vv. 4, 5.

ceasing, "Come" up to this second rung and learn what it is to be "gathered." I know one very godly minister who is just like this: he is overwhelmed with his work, he is always in a rush and has no time for anything. If only he could just learn our secret, and believe that God never gave a man more to do than he could do! And then why should he fret so much? Is not the result in God's hands, not ours? What a lot more work this man could do, if only he would take it quietly and rest in the Lord.

Or take another illustration. I once stayed in a house with some very earnest people, but oh! the wife was such a funny woman—a good Christian, yes, standing firmly on the first rung, but she sighed about everything. If the children were late from school, she knew they had been run over. If anybody preached for her husband, she sighed because she knew the people

would not like it. If the dinner were a little late, she sighed because she was sure it was spoiled. If it were ready, she sighed because she knew we should not like it. It was just sigh after sigh. I thought, Well here is a bit of work for the Lord to do in this mission. She prayed for her children and for the congregation, but I could not help feeling she was like a lot of Christians I know: I wished she would pray for herself. About the fifth day I noticed a solemn look on her face. She said, "*I* have got a blessing to-day." I answered, "I am so glad." "Why, did you think I needed one?" she said.

Some months after that I stayed there again. There was such a difference; she had got on to the third rung. But strangely enough her husband said, "I got so used to her sighing that I quite miss it." Personally I should be glad to miss a great deal of the unrest in many redeemed ones. If you are

wandering about with no king of power to order "*all* things well," let me beseech you to come to this abiding place in Christ, and at once you will find that you are away from the prowling beasts of unrest that inhabit the desert.

Mark vii. 37.

When you were in the world, you may have had no difficulties; the path was so broad there was no mistaking it, but now that the work of Divine Grace has begun in your heart you lose your way. You cannot find your road to the heavenly life because of the lack of those manifestations of heavenly light whereby alone you can see the path. If you stay on the first rung, you are unhappy; having turned your back on the world, you are there unable to realize the enjoyments of the soul that belong to those higher up. You see no light, either to the right hand or the left, save this—you are safe after death. But the trouble is you have got to live. Down there, it is wandering in a wilder-

ness; there nothing grows fit for your food. The fiery serpents — sin and Satan—are perpetually biting and stinging you, and there is no rest. The clay of carnality below, the burning sun of temptation above, the fierce colds of sorrow, when the sun's rays are hidden, are trying you. It is a "solitary way." *v.* 4. Oh, my friend, here is your only hope. Come up higher. Let it be true of you, "He gathered you unto Himself." Then you will find deliverance from unrest, and also from those other devils of uncleanness—lust in its many forms, passions of greed and covetousness, bad temper, and all the thousand things that place us "in the shadow of death, *v.* 10. being bound in affliction and iron." Even as I write, here is an illustration, just come to me by post. Let my correspondent's experience help you.

"Eight years ago I had rheumatic fever for the second time, which resulted in heart affection, and for that

stimulants and drugs (ether, nitrate of amyl, etc.) were prescribed and taken, until gradually I came to rely upon and take them when not even necessary, until they became a terrible snare and bondage to my soul. I knew I was wrong, and sinning against God and my body, but I refused to listen to His voice of warning. It was easy to persuade myself I should die without them, even though my doctors told me I was abusing them and harming myself. Then came a terrible family trouble, and my conscience awoke, and I tried with all my might to get free. All was of no use ; I was bound, as you described it yesterday, in 'affliction and iron.' Prayers and tears were my hourly experience, but the chains that bound me were rivetted more firmly than ever. So I lived, if such can be called life, knowing that I was in the miry clay and horrible pit. All the time, when able to go out, I was a

church goer and communicant. At last I began to sink into utter despair, for I could not do without stimulants, nor sleep without drugs. Thank God, His Holy Spirit did not leave me. One day I heard a sermon on the cleansing of the ten lepers, and it came to me that nothing and nobody but the Lord Jesus could make me *whole*, and that if I trusted Him to do it, without trying in any way to do it myself, He could do it thoroughly and altogether. Luke xvii. 12–19.

And He did.

Praise His glorious Name. Like the blind man, I do not know how, but from that week all desire for and reliance on either drug or stimulant was taken utterly and entirely from me. Now for eighteen months I have rejoiced in complete deliverance. I am 'kept by the mighty power of God.' He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder, and brought me out of the horrible pit and John ix. 21, 25. Jude 24.

miry clay and set my feet on the rock and established my goings."

It is good of God to send me that letter just now. May it be just what many a poor drink-enthralled, drug-ensnared person needs to enable them to do as the writer did,—get on the third rung and be delivered.

In verse eleven there is one more sin, which keeps many from living the life of being daily saved.

An unsubdued will.

v. 11. "They rebelled against the Word of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High." So with many now, they

1 Tim. iv. 8. cannot see that God's law is the best

1 John v. 3. for this life and that "His commandments are not grievous." They do their own will and love their own way instead of joyfully, morning by morning, submitting themselves to the law of God. This is just as big a sin as drunkenness, in the sense that it prevents our God from daily saving us

All are not of strong, passionate, animal natures ; some are lovers of folly, others of their own will. They can no more deliver themselves from this state of rebellion to the will of God without getting on to my third rung, than can the poor redeemed one who is fast held in the chains of any other sin. But if they cry to the Lord He is sure to deliver. Will you, unconsecrated one, try this plan, and no longer shall your wretched will ruin your testimony.

This word "cried," by the bye, in its Hebrew root, has a peculiar force : says Venema, " It denotes a cry of that kind into which any one, when shaken with a violent tempest of emotion, in the extremity of grief and anxiety, breaks with a *crash*, and with complainings, as the heavens send forth thunder and lightnings." In other words, a cry that cannot be contained.

I have written, you see, at great length on this head because it is the

most important perhaps of all, in "my way of daily salvation." May God grant you such conviction, that you will not rest until you can give thanks to God for His wonderful works to you, one of the children of men. But even then remember, it is daily salvation, not once done and done for ever.

CHAPTER VI

FOURTH RUNG

"LED"

"He led them forth by the right way." Ps. 78.

HAVING mounted to the third, it will not be hard to lead you to come to the fourth.

"*Led.*"

I know lots of Christians who never have mounted high up on the ladder of daily salvation because they think "What a lot I shall have to give up." I will acknowledge at once that when one first begins to look at the Christian life, it looks like a dreary path; the entrance to it is through so strait and narrow a gate, and what can be seen of the path from the outside looks rock-bound and dreary, whilst the other road Matt. vii. 14.

Matt. vii. 13.

the world walks on looks so bright, the way is broad, there are running streams, bright flowers, gaily dressed travellers and much outward sign at any rate of fun and merriment. But if you once enter the narrow way and mount up the first three steps, you will find yourself at a place I call

Consecration Corner.

At once you find yourself in a different atmosphere, living a life of joyful freedom. Your pathway until then has been a case of being

Redeemed from sin,
Gathered or kept,
Delivered or freed.

Now it is changed, you are at once led by the Lord Himself, till then He has been working for you to keep you, now He is leading you. Before, it was deliverance, now, it is progress. You are out of the pit, walking with Him, Whom your soul is beginning to love

past all utterance. He leads you by green pastures and still waters. There is the singing of birds and your morning is a morning without clouds; day by day He leadeth you into new delights, new revelations of Himself, new fields of happy service; "the way grows brighter and brighter still, for all the way long it is Jesus." You come to dark valleys, His presence makes the darkness only a shadow; sickness comes, He maketh your bed in the time of it. Ps. xli. 3. Your heart is heavy because of the sorrow and sin in the world, but He shares the burden with you, He sups with you and you with Him. And Rev. iii. 20. some day, unless He comes for you, you go to sleep in a dark room only to awake in the eternal glory, to be with Him leading you still for evermore.

I acknowledge that the way at first looks dreary, but God sees the end of the journey as well as the beginning. It is only to get on to my rung and let

Him lead you in all the details of your life,—to go nowhere unless the Lord leadeth, and goes with you,—to do nothing without asking, if it be His will ; then you walk at once in the light where there is no darkness. The other way looks very bright ; God sees the end of it too. You cannot know, but God does, that the water is bitter, the flowers are poppies which lull to a state of unconsciousness all who smell them, and gradually kill all that is divine in your nature. The look of fun and merriment is only skin deep ; the first blast of storm, or tempest kills it, and in its place is sorrow and unrest. Nor can you tell that soon the scene all changes, there is nothing but desert, wilderness and troubled sea ; then there is a Christless old age, a Christless bed of sickness, a going to sleep in a Christless death, an awakening to a Christless Day of Judgment, and, oh the pity of it, a Christless eternity which men call hell. This

God sees, therefore He never ceases to try to win poor wanderers, who find "no city to dwell in," that He may lead *v.* 4 them to a "city of habitation," even to *v.* 7. Himself.

But you say, "I have escaped that, for I am redeemed." Let me give you a perfect receipt for misery, that you may go about always with a very long face. Have a habit of getting down from my ladder and getting a little run in the world or pit. One hour on the ladder, the next in the pit. Yes, a half-hearted life is a surety for magnificent misery. May I give here an illustration of just what I mean, when I say,

What is a Christian?

It will also help you to understand this "being led." Turn with me to St. Luke's Gospel, 7th chapter, and read the story of the raising to life of the widow's son at Nain. It is a perfect illustration of the two lives, the Chris-

tian's life and the sinner's life with its degrees in both cases. I will call it

The Two Processions.

Luke vii. 11, 16. One is coming out of the gate of the city called Nain. The central figure of it is a young man carried on the shoulders of his six companions, who are thus performing their last act of love to their friend who is dead. Just behind them walks the sorrowing mother, and she is a widow. Behind her a long procession, for a great company was with her. Those nearest the body are those who knew him best, and in the distance are some who only knew him a little. The whole feature of this procession is death, sorrow, hopelessness, tears. If we were to paint it, the colouring would be black, the faces most hopeless and full of pain, and over all the sense of death.

A little lower down by the side of the lovely lake is another procession.

Here also the central figure is a young Man—our Lord Jesus Christ; with Him are "many of His disciples and much people." Here the marked features are all different: on every face there is the look of joy, life, peace, power, hope. Those who walk nearest to the Lord are so influenced by Him, that they become like Christ in feature somewhat, and have the same Spirit. The farther off the people are from the Centre, the less like Him they are and the less influenced by His personality and Spirit. If we put colouring to this part of the picture, it must be all light. The very faces shine and the pathway is strewn with sunshine. What we cannot see, but I wish we could, is this, that unseen to mortal eyes there are hovering over those two processions the Spirit of Life and Death, of God and the devil. The god of death has the young man in his clutch, his icy hand has touched his heart, and over the whole of that

procession he has cast his baneful influence. There are degrees of sin. Yes, it all depends how near to the central figure one walks, but the end for all is the same.

Over the other procession hovers and dwells the Spirit of God; life, power, joy, goodness, holiness, rest—all are His to give. There are degrees of Christlikeness in Christians. Yes, it all depends on how near you walk to Christ.

To be Led

is not only to be His disciple, but to walk so near Him in every step of the journey, that one is never away from His influence, from the power of His Spirit. It is more than blessed when, in the quiet of one's room at night, the events of the day stand out before us, to have the experience not only of having been delivered, but of having walked so near to Him that He has led in every step of the journey. He knew

the right road to take in that doubtful moment. It has been all sunshine, by clear waters, and over us He has cast the warmth of His love and the healing, up-building graces of His Spirit. S. of S. ii. 4.

Which procession are you in? The wrong one. Cry to Christ that He may come and meet you. Once more He will make the bearers of lust, passion and worldliness "*stand still*," and as He gives the command, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," the spirit of death will be obliged to depart from you, and you will be enabled to join the company of those who follow Christ in the procession of life. Luke vii. 14.

You are in the right procession, perhaps you say, but so little influenced by Him, Who leads it and you. My friend, "get nearer, get very close, walk right beside Him, and cease running away, every now and then, to mingle with those who follow after death." Then, with the rest of His disciples,

you will daily praise Him, Who has led you by the right way, and has made your heart to burn within you, as He talked with you concerning all things in the affairs of His kingdom. Little by little you will become like Him, changed into His image from glory to glory by His Spirit.

In the secret of His presence, your soul will delight to hide! And soon you will realize what it is to be a Christian. I say soon, for even the presence of Christ cannot at once warm the chilled heart of the worldly Christian. Even the Spirit of God, who influences those in the right procession, cannot at once change our vile bodies and make them like unto His glorious body. But stand on our fourth rung, and sooner or later it must be, even as He has said, "Your whole body shall be full of light," and ye shall no more walk in darkness, but, abiding in Him or in His procession, you shall bring forth much fruit, even

Phil. iii. 21.

Matt. vi. 22.

John viii. 12.

fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Thus shall ye be His disciple. Rom. vi. 22.

I have been very much impressed lately with a fact that certain scientific men have been writing about—the power of the influence that a strong personality has over a weaker character. We are told that supposing two people live together, and are much in one another's company, one being much the stronger character of the two, so powerful is the effect of the influence of the stronger upon the weaker that little by little the character of the weaker becomes like unto that of the stronger, in likes, dislikes, actions and conduct. But to me quite a new thought, and stranger still, is the fact that the weaker actually becomes like the stronger in features. If the husband be the very much stronger influence, his wife will become like him not only in little things, but in features too.

This is so all through life. The son

copies his father, the daughter has all the little tricks of the mother. Or again watch the young cricketer as he stands at the crease, and you can tell at what school he has been educated. In golf it is the same, the player has all the tricks of the teacher or of some player who has influenced him, and whom he is unknowingly copying. Even the preacher is thus influenced: he copies both in voice and action the arts of some one who has impressed him by his own individuality. We must not be surprised therefore that, if we stand upon our fourth rung, and follow very closely our Lord, His strong individuality and influence affect us in the same way, and little by little people notice we are becoming like Him. Not only in our actions but actually in our features. This is leaving out the greater truth—

2 Cor. iii. 18. the power of His Spirit in us, for as we walk "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are

changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Here is my fourth rung, led by Jesus. Stand on it, and in our rooms at night as we look back over the day, we shall indeed praise God that the light hath shined in our hearts that day, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

CHAPTER VII

FIFTH RUNG

"SATISFIED"

v. 9. "He satisfieth the longing soul."

UNTIL now our progress upwards has been one in which self has largely influenced us. We cried unto the Lord because we wanted to get out of the pit; He let down the ladder and we rejoiced because we were redeemed. Then we wished to escape from the darkness, gloom, and cold; so we drew
Ps. xci. 4. nearer to Him. At once He gathered us to Himself and covered us with His feathers, and under His wings did we trust. Then the inward desires troubled us, and the pains of sin hurt us; we cried, and triumphed gloriously in His deliverance. We wandered about,

having no city to dwell in, not knowing which way to direct our steps. He drew us after Himself until we rested in the green pastures, and looked up into His face as He led us by the still waters, and marvelled as He restored our souls. Each step upwards has been in a measure prompted by love of self. True, each rung has revealed more of Himself to our wondering souls, and we have found our hearts whispering, "Less of self, and more of Thee." But on this rung it is all different; we see Him, whom we have loved so long for what He had done and was doing for us. Now we see Him we lose ourselves, and we love Him for what He is.

It is Himself

we have come to. We are satisfied now.

Lost in love for Himself, the prayer comes ringing out of our very being, not an effort of prayer, but prayer because we cannot help it—

"Lord, Thyself at last hath conquered;
Grant me now my soul's petition—
None of self, and all of Thee."

It is Himself we love now—not warmth, safety, deliverance, guidance—just His own glorious Self—the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. "This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of
Sol. v. 16. Jerusalem." "I am my Beloved's, and
Sol. ii. 16. His desire is towards me." It is enough. Before, I rejoiced that He was mine and I was His; then Thou didst lead me on, until, on the fourth rung, I said, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is
Sol. vi. 3. mine." I did put Thee first, and said, "less of self, and more of Thee." Now I have seen Thee; my enraptured heart has but one expression—"I am my
Sol. vii. 10. Beloved's." It is now none of self, and all of Thee. There is no more after that. Thou hast said, "No man shall see Me,
Ex. xxxiii. 20. and live." I have seen Thee, and now self is crucified, selfishness is dead. Let

me die, yes, Lord, die daily, that I may live alone in Thee. For now my soul hath seen Thee, I am "*satisfied*."

Satisfied with Thee. The cross, not a wooden cross, but Thy cross, and Thyself stand between me and the old life, the old self, the world and its loves. To get back to them I must go through Thee or past Thee, and that can never be. For Thou art my Lord, my Beloved, and to pass by Thee is to hurt Thee in the house of Thy friends. This is the feeling of those who stand on the fifth rung, satisfied with Himself.

I will freely acknowledge I am finding it difficult, nay impossible, to write about this. One friend put it to me when I told him of my fifth rung, "It is easy to talk about, or write about, but it is difficult to experience and live there." I do not quite agree with him; it is not easy to talk about; yet there are none who have once stood on this step that do not feel as I do. We may not, I fear

do not, always live there, but you cannot write about it. Some things are too sacred to speak about; some feelings must be experienced, one cannot explain them. This is one. Such people do not say much, for how can they? But this "Himself" is real. The experience is true, the "satisfied" is truer. It is in the quiet of their own room, with the Bible at their side, or in the time of what appears loneliness, or darkness. They surprise you with the light in their eyes, the rest on their faces. You feel they have something the world knows not of, and cannot take away. And from such quiet times of blessed communion they rise, like giants refreshed, to go and live, and do, and be. It may be into the pulpit He leads them, or to the allotted task of every-day life. The world or lower-down Christians note the difference, marvel at the power, envy the rest and strange indifference to the world's joys or

opinions. They put it down to temperament, emotional enthusiasm, religious ecstasy. We know better, but cannot say anything. It is none of these things. It is Himself.

There, I confess I cannot write about it, and have just laid my pen down in despair. You must come up to my fifth rung ; then, and not till then, will you know what is meant by this "satisfied." This I know, it is possible to have Jesus with you, to preach about Him, and to rest in all His work for you, yet not to know Him. The real Church of Christ seems to be filled with three classes of people :—

Those who know Christ intellectually ;

Those who know Him emotionally ;

Those who know Him controllingly.

The first is good, the second is better, but the third is to be satisfied. How many there are—have we not been

amongst them?—who know all about Christ! They love to study about Him. It is their delight to search for new lights to throw into greater relief His wondrous work, His blessed character. Others, again, love to hear about Him, to have their heart-strings stirred, and at holy convention, solemn meeting, sacred communion time to lie and wash His feet with their tears, and cover them with their kisses, but it passes away. The third class have heard Him say, "Rise, and stand upon Thy feet." They have obeyed, and seen Himself. They are controlled; this does not pass away. Away, deep down, far back in themselves, there is something. It is Himself. Talk about it, they may not. Excrescences of the flesh like the growth of the weed in the well-kept garden there may be, and as far as I at present see, I fear there always will be, whilst we are in the flesh, but He is there; and in the secret of their own

hearts they are "satisfied." Yes, with Himself.

Before, we had peace about

The Irrevocable Past,

because we knew the truth about His death. Now we have Himself, and it is Himself is our salvation. Before, we had peace about

The Difficult Present,

because we knew a little about His deliverance. Now we have Himself, and are like the disciples in the ship, who struggled so hard when alone, that "they toiled in their rowing." The moment He came into the ship they had peace. But it was not till they came to the other side and knew Him that they had complete rest; and satisfied, they busied themselves for others and His glory. We talked before of purity, deliverance, cleansing. Now we have the Deliverer. We had some joy and rest. Now we have Himself.

Mark vi. 48.

Mark vi. 54.

Before, we had a certain degree of peace about

The Unknown Future,

because we believed God's Word, and we had His promises that death would have no sting, the grave no victory; and when the time came to go into the dark valley He would be with us. Now, He is with us; it is not a future hope; trusting in His promise, it is a present reality. Before, we had peace, now we have peace that passeth all understanding.

I can readily imagine that many will say, It is all very well for you, who are a preacher, to write like this; these things may be possible for you, but for me impossible. I have to go to my business, or attend to my household, and I cannot be always thinking about Christ. I must think, and concentrate all my thoughts on my duties, my work. Thank God, this is not what is meant at

all. We need not think of Him, as you call it. The wife, busy with the things of her life, is not always thinking of her husband, yet she is ever conscious of his presence in her life—of his love, protection, provision, care,—that he is working for her, that all he has is hers. So with those who stand on my fifth rung,—

They are out of the Pit,

and have their feet on the soil of the blessed life. They may be busy, very busy. But He is there, living for them, working for them; and all He has is theirs, rich indeed with all the riches of heaven.

Satisfied? Yes, we are unwise, and know not what is truth, what to do, where to go, what to say.

He is our Wisdom. 1 Cor 1 30.

We have no righteousness; indeed, are hideously sinful; no one realizes this hatefulness of self so much as those who have seen Him and know Him.

He is our Righteousness.

We have no ways of becoming holy, pure, and unblamable.

He is our Sanctification.

We have no ways of getting to heaven —this body will become dust. How shall we ever stand in heaven? Where is it—what is it?

He is our Redemption.

It is not that He provides or gives us these things; He is Himself these very things for us. So in everything. Satisfied. Not in ourselves—we are dead;

It is Himself.

It seems to me that here is the secret of the Christian life—the blessed, holy, and obedient life. It is to have Himself. In God's word we find it was always so. Whenever God sent any one out to do His work, He said, "I am with you." It was so when Christ was on the earth, when He was not with His disciples, there was trouble. So now, He sends us out to be witnesses,

and wills to be with us, only in much more completeness than ever before. The doorway to every blessing is Himself—"I am the door." Let me put it thus, the fifth rung is on the other side of Himself.

CHAPTER VIII

FIFTH RUNG

ITS DANGERS

I WANT to speak of some of the dangers of this fifth rung. Danger? Yes, for even here we have to watch.

First : *Spiritual Pride.*

On this rung God gives such graces, that they excite the admiration of others. Trials are almost loved, and sacrifice of self becomes natural. Enthusiasm for Christ and His service, love of prayer and longing to be alone with Himself, hatred of sin, instant deep sorrow for hasty word or idle action, these are the heart's constant feelings. The soul no

longer clings to earth, but soars above it, and is in Him. Then comes the temptation: I am different to other people. We think we have all; so we have; but whilst in one sense we are dead, in another very much we live. The danger is here—Satan tempts us, not to sin in the sense which people call sin, but he gets us to look at the gift, instead of Christ Himself. We so love the truth which we have learned, that we want every one else to learn it too. It is the truth, the joy, the holiness, the peace we think of. Why do we not learn? it is not an IT we have had: it is Himself. Then comes unwittingly self-esteem, an undervaluing of others, who have not reached our rung. We become hard in our judgments of others, scandalized at their sins. We use the terms of death, and in a sense we die. That is, we die to the world and our own efforts. But we are not dead; for if we were we should possess nothing.

A dead person has nothing—not even holiness.

We desire to be humble, but are mightily displeased if we are not talking and telling our own experience. In fact, we have fallen from our rung, and are taking pleasure in our own sanctity, instead of Himself. The result—which of us has not seen it in others? Would to God, if it is there, we might see it in ourselves—the most hateful, harmful state,—a holiness person who has fallen from Himself,—to what they have from Him.

Second: *Despair when Christ withdraws Himself.*

Is this possible? I fear so, for there is growth, even on this rung. Yea, verily, growth in death. Why should He withdraw Himself? you ask. I cannot tell you why, nor can I say He will. I only know He has. After such per-

fect fellowship, there have come times as dark as hell. The relish for prayer, reading, service, gone. Thoughts, distractions; desires for things left long ago; trials multiplying, troubles rolling in one upon the other. Panting after God, Who seemed farther away than ever. Intense sensitiveness of sin, reparation of even fancied wrong to others; public confession of sin, that in others would have appeared as graces; and yet He appeared as if He was not. Why? Is this an answer? The delight of being alone with Himself became intemperance, even to the neglect of duty. God must deal with this. For this being alone, this very separation from the world, is just self again. It is so glorious to be alone with Him—to be only with Christians. And Jesus wants a deeper death. Not only to self-interest, but to self-love of spiritual things and self-glory.

It is an easy death to die to the

world and separate ourselves from all the littleness and inanities of the world, to Himself, and to the company of people like-minded with ourselves. But the resurrection life is to be for God's glory, in the saving of the world.

So it seems to me He withdraws His face and is silent, until we are so dead to self that the sweet communion can be willingly intercepted to go out and do His will. Such death, that we can be crucified enough to go and be in the world, whilst not in any wise of it. To listen to the vapid talk of the worldly woman, to see the empty uselessness of the worldly man, is a death to self few have reached. It is so utterly uninteresting, so devoid of any self-entertainment or enjoyment. Yet here is death. To be willing even to take up this cross with Him.

One thing let me say, When the company of the worldling becomes

anything but a cross, fear it, run away from it, lest it drag you down to the very pit again. This can be no part in the worldly Christian's life, of enjoying the things of the world; it is merely the courtesy of Christ, who endures that He may win.

I believe this is only given to the few, who are so dead that they have nothing in them that enjoys the worldly spirit, that crucified their Lord, but are in the world even whilst not of it. It is death, indeed, for the self-opinionated, judging Christians will cast sideling glances at you; but you are dead to praise or blame. So when Christ withdraws Himself, or you seem as if you had lost all, do not despair. Trust on. He is teaching you something. Though He slay you, still trust Him.

Third: *Misleading Language or Expression.*

I quite see here is my danger in writ-

ing of this fifth rung, lest I have used language which misleads, and is therefore harmful. When one speaks of being dead to self—to the world—one does not mean dead in the sense that self does not live, because painful experience teaches that self is not dead: or as one man puts it, self has a horrible way of coming to life again. If one were literally dead, there would be no danger of ever sinning or of ever getting off this rung to the lower ones on our ladder. I think "crucified" is the better word.

It seems to me something like this. I go into my room at night and look at my picture. Have I been satisfied that day? If so, I know why. I have been so in Christ, that self has been put upon the cross, and has been in the place of death. If I have not, but have felt the sting of sarcasm, the touch of pride, or the movements of the flesh, it has been because I have been self-

reflecting, dwelling in myself instead of Himself. My times of reflection have been self-reflection, instead of Christly recollectedness. This I know, whatever degree of being dead is possible, we are always alive enough to be able to return into our self. Our life must be always an overcoming one. The promise is "to him that overcometh;" this is gloriously possible, and the secret is here, my fifth rung—Himself. Rev. iii., etc.

"Oh my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: I have no good beyond Thee." Oh, blessed life in death. Oh blessed gain in loss. Oh blessed triumph in defeat. Oh "life hid in God." "I count not myself to have yet apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." I have seen the goal—had a little taste of its experience. And, Ps. xvi. 2, R.V. Phil. iii. 13–15.

friend, I would fain draw you with me, that He and we may rejoice together. "Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded."

CHAPTER IX

SIXTH RUNG

"FILLED"

"He filleth the hungry soul with goodness."—*v.* 9.

EVERY illustration is imperfect, and cannot be carried to its legitimate end, lest it be ridden to death. Our ladder is no exception to this rule. If you will refer to the beautiful picture, which my artist friend, Mr. Muirhead has painted for this book, you will see, that when we have reached the fifth rung we are at once out of the pit, and step into the highest height of Christian experience,

Satisfied with Christ Himself.

After that there is no more.

The sixth and seventh rungs are therefore the results of standing on the fifth ; and instead of standing on them, it would be perhaps more correct to describe ourselves as leaning against them.

Filled, yes, filled with Himself,

His Holy Spirit.

This is what is called "being filled with the Spirit," "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," "the Pentecostal blessing," and many other expressions the different schools of thought use in their teaching on "The higher life," the life of holiness, or, as I would venture to call it, the real Christian life.

Naturally my hand itches to write long and fully upon this most blessed subject, "filled with the Spirit," but as I have already written somewhat fully thereon, in my "Bible Talks"; and others, more able teachers than I, have

published much, to refrain is necessary.

I would take you to another side of this truth.

"He filleth the hungry soul with goodness" may surely be read, Jesus filleth us with good things. Instead of bad thoughts, feelings, desires, He filleth us with good thoughts, feelings and desires. The feelings of sloth give place, when filled with Himself, to feelings of ceaseless energy; for the Holy Ghost, who fills us, is called the Comforter, or more correctly, the Energiser. When thus filled St. Paul writes: "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was in me." He was constrained by this feeling of love to crucify the natural desires for self-enjoyment and self-indulgence. Self-love was forced out of him by this new power—love to Christ. This is the manner of entering in the fulness of the Spirit hath. He

1 Cor. xv. 10.

1 Thess. i. 9.

maketh us turn from idols to serve the living and true God. Such love for Christ fills us that, just as once we lived to make money, to seek with all our hearts pleasure, now with all our hearts we serve Him, not from a sense of duty, but constraining love.

There is a beautiful illustration of this in the Bible—in Exodus xxi. In olden times the Jews were allowed two kinds of servants — one, the Gentile slave, who was a slave for ever; the other a Jew, who, probably a poor man, was paying by service, some debt he had contracted with his rich master. Every seventh year all debts were cancelled, when his service ceased, the debt being paid. But sometimes it happened, that during the course of these years of service, the servant learned to love his master, and when the time came for parting his sorrow would be apparent. The master also loved the servant, and the desire for endless service was

mutual. The only way it could be managed was for the servant to go before the judges and people assembled in the courts of the temple "and plainly say I love my master; I will not go out free;" in other words, to convince Ex. xxi. 5.
them he was in no wise coerced, that his action was solely prompted by love. Then the master took the servant to the doorpost, and with an awl bored his ear through, leaving a hole in it, like unto that made nowadays for wearing earrings. Then the master took him to his home, "and he shall serve him for ever." For the rest of his life he Ex. xxi. 6.
carried about with him the mark of a free man, who served his master because he loved him.

Those who lean on our sixth rung have a mark also that all can see—love, constraining love. It is evident such love cannot be hidden; it must find an outlet in deeds and acts for the loved One. We serve Him for ever,

not because we ought, but because we love.

There is no room for self-congratulation or self-praise, seeing that the very love we love Him with, He has had to give us. Here is the first of His gifts of filling, the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts love to Himself;
Rom. v. 5. it is the gift of God.

Another goodness, or Godness, with which we find ourselves filled is

Love to Men.

This is not the natural love we have to some, but the divine love which compels us to love those, whom by nature we would either not think of, feel coldly towards, or actually dislike and hate. It is not natural to love those whom you have never seen, such as the heathen, those whom you by chance pass in your daily life, or those whom you address in some meeting.

Nor is it human to love those who despitefully use you, or those to whom by nature you have an antipathy. But so filled is the one who leans on my sixth rung with Christ's Spirit that he cannot but love all men. His heart is so drawn out, that it becomes an absorbing passion to comfort, build up, relieve, and lead to Christ those who otherwise would not interest him, or, perhaps, would actually repel him. Gal. v. 22, 23.

Again, if we lean on the sixth rung, we have as our continual experience joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. If we live in the Spirit we have crucified the flesh, and in its place He hath filled us with these good things.

Now go into the quiet of your own room and see if you have in any degree this "filled." If not get up higher; for these are the experiences of those who rest there.

Do you ask, "Can we always be thus filled? Why not? it depends on yourself. He filleth those, who *will* to lean on the sixth rung, with goodness. Be not influenced by others' experiences; press onwards yourself, and get into the habit of abiding in Him. Many a time in the quiet of my room at night I have praised God the Lord for His goodness, because of the experience of love, joy, peace, etc., He has filled me with that day. This has so strengthened me to resolutions of abiding, that I pass it on to you, that my ladder may help you too.

Is this all the filling? No, ten thousand times no. Here is another. Filled with the spirit of unquestioning

Obedience,

Jno. ii. 5.

So that whatsoever He saith unto you, it has become easy to do it. The very mind of Christ is in some measure in

you, as it also was in Christ Jesus, Who, being God, thought it not a thing to be kept to Himself,[1]—when He saw the lost state of those whom He loved, He therefore made Himself of no reputation, and in one sense laid His Godhead upon the altar of love in heaven, as the first gift in His sacrifice for us; and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him

Phil. ii. 5–10.

[1] You will please spend some minutes dwelling upon the translation I have dared to give you of these holy verses. The word translated robbery in our version has more the meaning given here. His Godhead, not a thing to be grasped at, or kept to Himself. The word *at* also should be in. It is not down here we bow, but in the holiest place, into God's presence we have liberty to enter, and be accepted by Him, who cannot even behold iniquity.

. . . that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

I do not, of course, mean for a moment we can be ever as complete as Christ, or perfect in love, with its result of perfection of sacrifice and obedience. But He certainly does fill with His Spirit those, who lean on our sixth rung, that emptied of self, there does come to them, the sense of humility, and obedience; which enables them to think no sacrifice too great to do His will, in saving those who are lost. Obedience unto death of self becomes easier, than disobedience unto life of self. In fact, to do the latter is to descend from the fifth rung down to the first.

Then, again, He filleth with the spirit of

Reverence.

Carelessness of demeanour in His service is impossible, or lightness of

word in speaking of holy things. The sense of standing in His presence pervades one, and holy, holy, holy, is the attitude of heart and soul. How much of the work of Christians is marred from want of this, how many a solemn address has been spoiled by irreverence of word or action! Many a young Christian's upward journey has been hindered, if not entirely stopped, by meeting us preachers after a meeting, or staying with us in our homes. Oh, that I for one might always lean on the sixth rung—that not only love, peace, and joy might be mine, but reverence also.

Well, brethren, here are some of the things He filleth us with. Has the recital of them made you hungry? Let me whisper to you, close in your ear. Get alone with Him, abide in Him, until lost in love, you find "He filleth the hungry soul with good things," then you will comprehend with all saints

Eph. iii. 18, 19. what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

CHAPTER X

SEVENTH RUNG

"BROUGHT TO PERFECTION"

"So He bringeth them to their desired haven."
—*v.* 30.

I DO not know what your desired haven may be; mine is to be *a Man.* Many years ago, when I first left home, my father put his hand upon my shoulder, and looking into my eyes, said, as a parting word,

"*Try to be a man.*"

That has been, and is, the ambition of my life, the language of my most earnest prayer, and one of the reasons why I became a Christian. I found I could not be a man, evil was too strong in and around me; to be strong, pure, noble, heroic, gentle, great in my own

strength was impossible. This is to me the meaning of my seventh rung. If, in my room at night, looking over the events of the day, I find I have been able to quit myself as a man, I know the reason why. He has brought me to my desired haven, changed me into His image, and strengthened me with all might by His Spirit in the inner man; "built up," which has but one meaning, made like unto Himself. Here is perfection. For was ever man like unto this Man?

Eph. iii. 16.

Job xxii. 23.

There are privileges for us of perfection however besides this.

God's aristocracy.

Jesus has said to us, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me,—and where I am, there also shall My servant be . . . him will My Father honour." Think ye there is no aristocracy among the saints of God? Solomon says, "The king's favour is towards a wise

Jno. xii. 26.

servant." This is so among the servants of earthly potentates. Our queen honours her wise servants, she makes them earls, baronets, or knights; gives them not only titles and wealth; but entrusts to them the secrets of her state affairs and the government of her kingdom. So it is with us. God gives to every man his work; but to the wise servant He entrusts the secrets of His state, the important service, the Government of His kingdom. He lays before them the plans of His saving grace, and sends them forth, having first given them power to do His bidding. The wealth of His riches are at their disposal, and the armies of God are at their command. The earls of Heaven's making may be in humble, lowly position in earth's reckonings, but they have a might the world knows not of, a peace and joy it cannot take away. The face and life of the servant in the kitchen, girl behind the

Prov. xiv. 35.

Mark xiii. 34.

shop counter, clerk in office, workman earning his daily wage, unknown minister, or humble evangelist, tell the story,

Him will My Father honour.

Truly the last shall be first, and the first last, when we know as we are known. These have grace abounding towards them, that they "always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. . . . Being enriched in every thing."

2 Cor. ix. 8, 11.

But the desired haven is not only the perfection of manhood and honour, carrying with it the joyful sense of responsibility in being the doers of His will in the advancement of His kingdom and cause; with the boundless stores of His grace to draw upon. But He maintains the cause of His servant, and His servant. No sense of responsibility for success crosses the controlled heart, this is His work, ours alone to be faithful. We may often seem to fail,

1 Kings viii. 59. Isa. xli. 10.

but we cannot see the end. Every step is planned by infinite wisdom, and what appears to be failure is really great success. So we eat the bread of satisfaction, whilst others are hungry; we drink the cup of joy, whilst others thirst; we rejoice in Himself, and sing for joy of heart, whilst others howl for vexation of spirit. Oh, the privilege of being amongst the honoured of the Lord! Isa. lxv. 13, 14.

Let us not forget this one point, even though I weary you with its repetition. Our desired haven is always just the fifth rung, "in Himself." Away from Him one moment, and all is dark, in Him there is only light. Get into the quiet of your room, and if you have not lived up here as yet, or have gone down lower, having once enjoyed the life in Him; listen, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall Matt. xi. 28.

find rest unto your souls." Thus He speaks to you, it is always the same, Come to Me ; He is the haven. The privileges are innumerable, and constant.

Just as I close this book, let me take you to the last blessing in my ladder. Here, resting on the seventh rung, He gives us spiritual vision. We see the future. Just as He was highly exalted and given a name above every name ; so in measure shall the faithful servant be exalted ; the heavenly aristocracy on earth shall become the aristocracy of heaven. See the prospect that lies out before you, as you sit in your room at night, and think, soon He is coming again. Out of your heart breaks the prayer, " Come quickly, Lord Jesus." You can almost hear the words, as He, whom you have so loved on earth, puts His hands upon you, and says : " Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I

will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. xxv. 21.

Not successful, only faithful, then to go on for ever still faithful, with the same Lord, still in Him, ruling for Him, ruling with Him. If the joy down here has been great, what will it be there, when we enter into "the joy of the Lord"? Then we, His servants, "shall serve Him, and we shall see His face." Rev. xxii. 3, 4. If it has been so wondrous to see Him down here, as in a glass darkly; oh, brethren, what will it be to see His face, with nothing between! That will be not only our desired haven, but heaven. He will have brought us there, every step from that horrible pit, right up to this, that is before us and soon will be reality, when with robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, we shall be before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among us. Rev. vii. 14, 17. We shall hunger no

more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead unto living fountains of water : and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."

Oh, blessed prospect! Is it for all Christians? Nay, surely nay, this is for the faithful only. Brethren, let us pray for one another, that we may so die daily, that the experience each night as we go into the quiet of our room, and look at our ladder may be—Praise the Lord for His goodness, that this day He has kept us high up, satisfied, filled, brought to our desired haven, not only standing on the fifth rung, but leaning on the sixth and seventh. Then when the day dawns it will be our experience, He has brought us to our last desired haven. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask

or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end." Amen. Eph. iii. 20, 21.

CONTRASTS OF OUR PSALM.

What we were.	**What we are.**
v. 4. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.	v. 7. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
v. 5. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.	v. 9. He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.
v. 10. Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.	v. 14, 16. He brought them out of darkness and the shadows of death, and brake their bands in sunder. For He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.
v. 17, 18. Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted: their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.	v. 20. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.
v. 25. He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.	v. 29. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.
v. 33. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground.	v. 35. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into waterspringS.
v. 34. A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.	v. 37. And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.
v. 39. Again they are minished, and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.	v. 41. Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction and maketh his families like a flood.

v. 43. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.